



Pipestone National Monument News

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your comments and suggestions for improving Pipestone National Monument over the past year and a half. Your comments and ideas were, and continue to be, instrumental in devising future guidance for the national monument that will be gathered together in a general management plan. In this newsletter, we utilized some of your ideas and organized them into concepts around which draft alternatives will be developed. We again need your advice, suggestions, and comments on these concepts.

As a reminder, general management plans provide the guidance for overall management of all national park system areas. This process requires that we develop a range of possible alternative future conditions and management strategies for the site. The final plan will consider the purpose and significance of the national monument in determining resource preservation, visitor use, development needs, and information/education issues for the next 15 to 20 years.

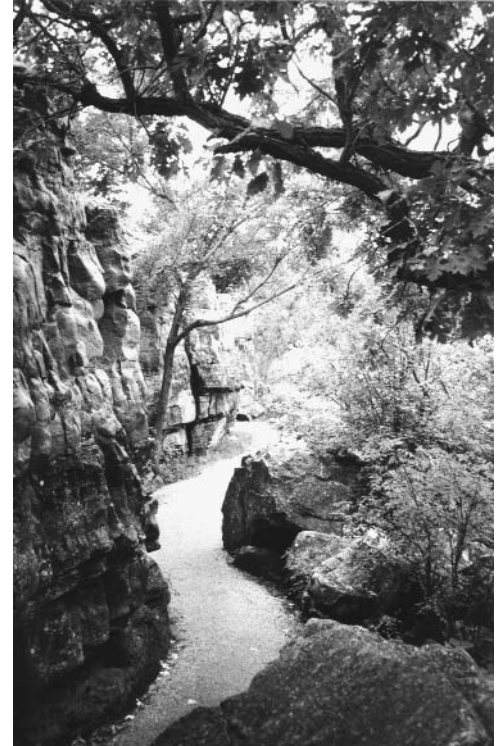
This newsletter is the first opportunity for you to respond to different preliminary alternative concepts. Admittedly, they are rather vague at this point. However, your ideas, comments and suggestions will help us to detail and refine an appropriate range of alternatives and to select a preferred alternative, which will be published in a Draft General Management Plan and made available for your review in early 2003.

Although public review meetings will be held on the Draft General Management Plan following the release of that plan, I encourage you to provide comments on the preliminary alternative concepts outlined in this document. Please send your comments to me at the address below. They are important to ensure we produce the best plan possible for this important site.

Please submit your comments by July 15, 2002.

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Superintendent

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Our Progress to Date

The planning for a general management plan for Pipestone National Monument began in August 2000 with a notice published in the *Federal Register* and a news release announcing the beginning of the general management plan/environmental impact statement process.

In accordance with federal compliance requirements, national monument staff wrote letters to 27 tribes inviting participation in the October 2000 public meetings and offering to meet individually with tribes. Other letters were sent to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, other interested federal and state agencies, local governments, quarriers, interested individuals, and organizations. Recently, an additional 12 tribal governments have been invited to participate and provide input into the plan.

In October 2000 two public meetings were held at the national monument to begin the

public involvement portion of the plan. At the same time, the planning team made up of national monument staff, planners from the National Park Service Denver Service Center, the National Park Service Harper's Ferry Interpretive Design Center, and the National Park Service Regional Office in Omaha, met to familiarize itself with the national monument and to identify issues and concerns to be addressed in the plan.

The planning team met again in February 2001 to identify preliminary alternatives. Several were identified, tested, adjusted, and ultimately discarded. New concepts, not full-blown alternatives, evolved over the past year based on comments, suggestions, and ideas from the two public scoping meetings, various local groups, American Indian tribal governments, and individuals, along with subsequent letters, e-mails, and conversations with park staff.

Two additional news releases were sent out in February and August of 2001 to keep the public abreast of the team's activities and to seek additional comment. Consultations with individuals, various local groups, and American Indian tribal governments and individuals will continue throughout the entire planning process.

We have reviewed the comments and used those ideas that we believe we can accomplish and that are pertinent to the general management plan. The vast majority of comments speak directly to realistic desired outcomes at the national monument. Some of the public comments received have reached beyond the scope of the general management plan to suggest specific solutions to problems. These are valuable ideas and we will refer to them again when we reach the future planning stages. Funding and staffing issues, for example, will be addressed by the national monument through internal National Park Service channels based on the outcome of this plan, and detailed interpretive needs will be addressed in a comprehensive interpretive plan.

Other comments revolved around things that we must do regardless of planning initiatives. Since much of basic park management is specified in laws, policies, and mandates, issues that fall into this category will not be addressed through alternatives. Examples of such issues are lack of basic resource data, access for the disabled, tribal and public input in decisions, and protection and preservation of endangered species and natural processes. We strive to meet these mandates in each of the alternatives developed. They are understood but not stated.

These statements are important because they help us understand what is important about Pipestone National Monument. They form a foundation upon which all concepts in the General Management Plan are based, and provide direction for management of the national monument.

Purpose

The legislative purpose of Pipestone National Monument is threefold:

- To administer and protect the pipestone quarries, reserving the quarrying of pipestone for Indians of all tribes
- To protect cultural and natural resources within the monument boundaries
- To provide for the enjoyment and benefit of all people

Significance

Pipestone National Monument is a culturally significant site as the location of red pipestone also known as Catlinite, quarried by American Indians from prehistoric times to the present.

The national monument is significant as a sacred site for American Indian spiritual and cultural activities.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for its history of American and European-American Indian relations; this includes European exploration in the early 1800s, specific quarrying rights reserved by the Treaty of 1858 and later expanded to Indians of all tribes in 1937, and the Pipestone Indian School (1892-1953).

Pipestone National Monument protects a significant ethnographic landscape consisting of tallgrass prairie, unique geologic features, federally threatened and endangered species, and rare habitats.

Themes

Interpretive themes are those important concepts around which the interpretation of Pipestone National Monument is based. Interpretive media (brochures, signs, exhibits, film) would be based on the following themes:

The remaining comments were related primarily to visitor use, interpretation, the quarries, ceremonial use, and development. Taken together, the comments have been organized into a series of major decisions that the General Management Plan needs to make while remaining consistent with national monument purpose and significance.

Purpose and Significance

Purpose and significance statements reaffirm our understanding of Congress' intent in making Pipestone National Monument a

unit of the national park system, and confirm the importance of the area to the nation's cultural and natural heritage. Purpose statements explain why Congress established Pipestone National Monument. They come directly from the enabling legislation and other laws. Significance statements describe what is important and unique about the cultural and natural resources of Pipestone National Monument and help place it in its regional and national context.

- Pipes have important religious and secular roles and meanings in both traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures.
- The quarrying of pipestone by hand at Pipestone National Monument represents an ancient process that has provided and continues to provide this unique mineral to American Indians for their use in making pipes and other culturally associated objects.
- The cultural and natural landscapes protected at Pipestone National Monument are the tangible elements that reflect a sacred and spiritual place for many American Indians.
- The national monument has been a special gathering place over time for Indian cultures. The association of Catlinite and fertile prairie soils brought American Indians and Euro-Americans into contact.

Decision Points

Decision points are the primary questions the general management plan must answer. These are based on public and agency issues and concerns and are a very important part of the planning process because they help focus the plan. The planning team identified the following questions to be answered by the plan:

1. How can the monument accommodate American Indian uses and interests while managing for nonimpairment of cultural and natural resource values as required by law?
2. How can the monument honor sacred values associated with this area by American Indians while still providing opportunities for visitor use?
3. How can the monument preserve cultural and natural resources while providing effective visitor services?
4. To what degree should the monument respond to external activities, concerns, and threats that could affect its cultural and natural resources?

ARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

We have preliminary concepts to show you, and in the upcoming months the planning team would work to develop the alternatives in more detail. The alternatives would describe all actions proposed, and the possible impacts of each alternative would be considered in some detail. Each alternative is centered on a guiding concept statement or set of statements that would lay out a direction for the alternative.

The planning team has been working to address the issues and concerns at Pipestone National Monument within the general management plan. We have been acting slowly and prudently to ensure that the monument's significance to American Indians is addressed while addressing the resource preservations and visitor use requirements of the National Park Service mission. We are now ready to craft appropriate alternatives and would like your comments on the alternative concepts we have included in this newsletter.

The following are short descriptions of the "no action" and two alternative concepts developed by the planning team. There are things that we know will be the same in all alternatives. These are:

- *Quarrying by American Indians would continue to be consistent with legislation.*
- *The Superintendent would form an intertribal consultative group to discuss issues and provide recommendations for consideration by the Superintendent on management issues at the national monument.*
- *A study would be undertaken to better understand the issues surrounding quarrying. Such issues would include pumping of quarries during the wet season, mechanical vs. hand tool use, safety, and economic impact.*

o Action

"No action" represents the existing conditions at the national monument. It is presented as a way to help the reader compare current conditions to the two proposed concepts. Examining the existing condition is useful in understanding why the National Park Service or the public may believe that certain future changes are necessary or advisable. The primary concerns with the existing condition have to do with facilities and with the treatment and interpretation of cultural and natural resources.

The current layout and facilities at Pipestone National Monument would remain as they were designed in the 1950s. Cultural and natural resources would continue to be protected and programs underway to preserve and restore prairie as an appropriate setting for an understanding of the national monument's cultural significance would also continue.

Interpretive materials and programs would remain on a general level centering on the quarrying process and the demonstration of pipestone carving. The Circle Trail would continue to be a focal point of the visitor experience outside of the visitor center.

Space for maintenance, administration, general storage, museum collections storage, conference room, work space, and library would remain tight. Public restroom and museum exhibit space, and theater configuration would continue to be inadequate for visitors and staff alike.

ternative Concept 2

In this concept, the visitor center, roads, picnic area, and other structures would remain in their current locations to serve both visitors and quarriers. The visitor center would be enlarged to meet the current visitor and staff needs.

A new emphasis would be placed on interpretation of the quarries, their significance, and the quarrying process. The national monument would develop additional interpretive media on these features.

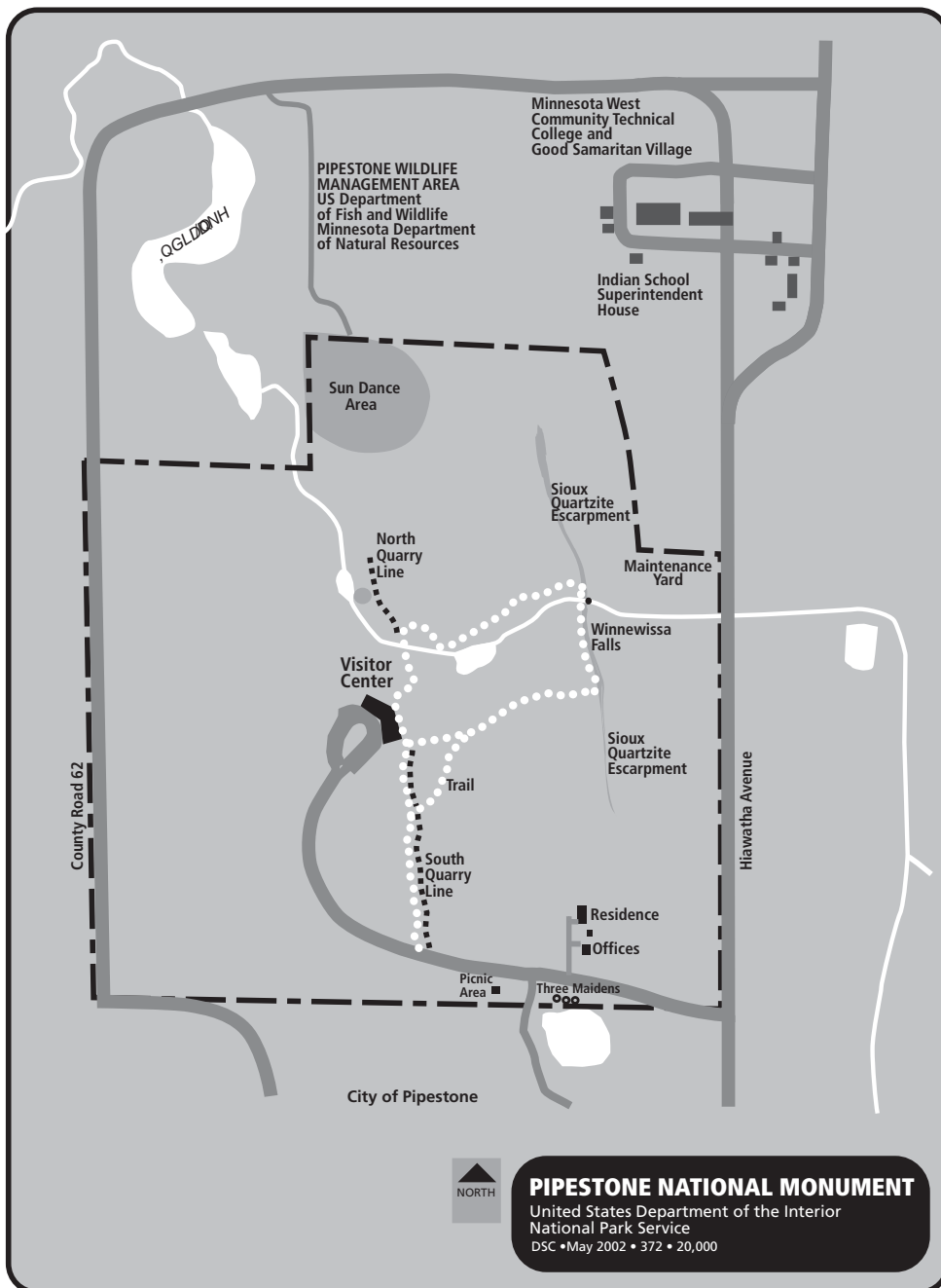
The property on the north managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources/United States Fish and Wildlife Service would be managed under a mutually acceptable cooperative agreement. This would allow restoration of the prairie as an appropriate setting for the cultural resources of the national monument and serve the practical purpose of exotic species (weed) eradication and the restoration of the prairie.

It should be noted that these concepts are general and that they will evolve and change based on public comment and on the input of tribes and involved quarriers. These are not cast in stone. New ideas are welcome. Mixing of ideas in the concepts is encouraged. Your suggestions will help us to better understand what actions should be taken at the national monument.

(Please see attached comment form to fill out and mail back.)

What's Next?

Comments should be returned to the Superintendent within 30 days. At that time the planning team will evaluate the responses and determine how the alternatives could be improved. Subsequently, a draft general management plan/environmental impact statement will be written providing a more detailed description of the alternatives and explaining their environmental impacts. That plan will undergo National Park Service review and then be mailed to the public sometime in February of 2003 for a 60-day review. At the same time meetings will be held to hear from the public.



ternative Concept 1

This concept focuses on the reduction of development within the heart of the national monument. It puts emphasis on the setting, history, and spiritual significance of the national monument as the source of pipestone. Without the visitor center and parking area in the middle of the quarries and with ongoing prairie restoration, the visitor would be able to better imagine the site as it was prehistorically and to sense the power and significance of the site to American Indians.

All essential visitor, operational, and administrative facilities would be relocated

inside and near the exterior boundary. The visitor would receive orientation and background information at the new visitor facility and then explore the national monument by way of the trail system. Provisions would be made for vehicle access into the site for the handicapped, the elderly, and for quarriers.

The property on the north managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources/United States Fish and Wildlife Service would be acquired. This would allow restoration of the prairie north of the national monument as an appropriate setting for the cultural resources of the national monument and serve the practical purpose of exotic species (weed) eradication and the restoration of the prairie.

Planning Tasks and Schedule

Developing Alternatives.....February 2001 - June 2002

- Develop draft alternatives
- Prepare and distribute alternatives newsletter to public
- Begin writing background sections, gathering environmental data
- Develop preliminary preferred alternative
- Select NPS preferred alternative for the draft plan

Preparing the Draft GMP/Environmental Impact Statement..... June 2002 - August 2002

- Team writes a draft plan
- Newsletter comments incorporated

Park / Region / NPS Washington Office review.....August 2002 - January 2002

- Park review
- Document rewrite and editing
- Regional review
- Document rewrite
- NPS Washington Office review
- Document rewrite
- Document printing

Public Review..... February 2003 - March 2003

- 60-day public review
- Hold public meetings
- Meet with concerned publics

Analyze Comments and Produce Final Plan..... March 2003 - July 2003

- Analyze and respond to comments
- Reconfirm or change NPS preferred alternative
- Print final plan
- Document available for public review

Record of Decision.....July 2003

- Final plan approved and signed

Implementation.....September 2003

- Plan may be implemented

Planning Team

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT DISCLOSURE

Please be aware that due to public disclosure requirements, the National Park Service, if requested, is required to make the names and addresses of commenters public. However, individual respondents may request that this information not be released. The National Park Service will then determine whether the information can be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act, and we will honor your request to the extent allowed by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organization or business officials, available for public inspection in their entirety.